



Name: _____

Using Prior Knowledge: Poetry



Directions: Before reading about poetry in the following section, answer these questions.

1. Have you ever written a poem? If so, was it difficult to do? Why or why not?

2. Write a poem with rhyming verse.

3. Write a poem with unrhymed verse.

Comprehension: Epitaphs

Epitaphs are verses written on tombstones and were very popular in the past. The following epitaphs were written by unknown authors.

On a Man Named Merideth

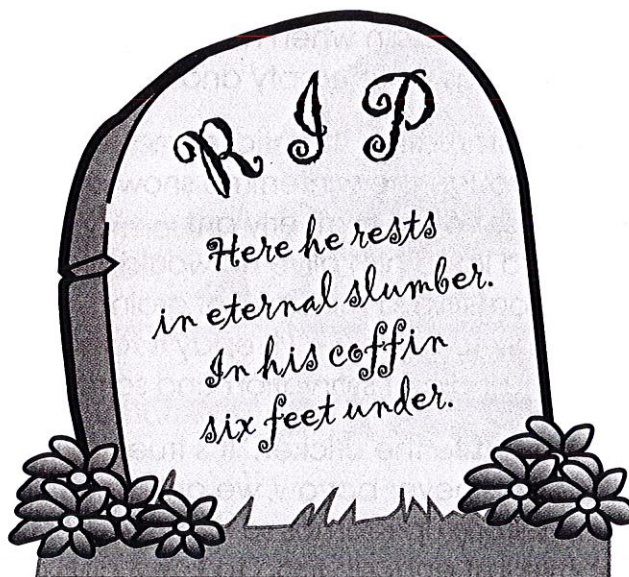
Here lies one blown out of breath
Who lived a merry life and died a Merideth.

On a Dentist

Stranger, approach this spot with gravity:
John Brown is filling his last cavity.

On Leslie Moore

Here lies what's left
Of Leslie Moore
No Les
No more



Directions: Answer these questions about the epitaphs.

1. What does the phrase "blown out of breath" mean? _____

2. What does the author mean when he says "and died a Merideth"? _____

3. What cavity is John Brown filling? _____

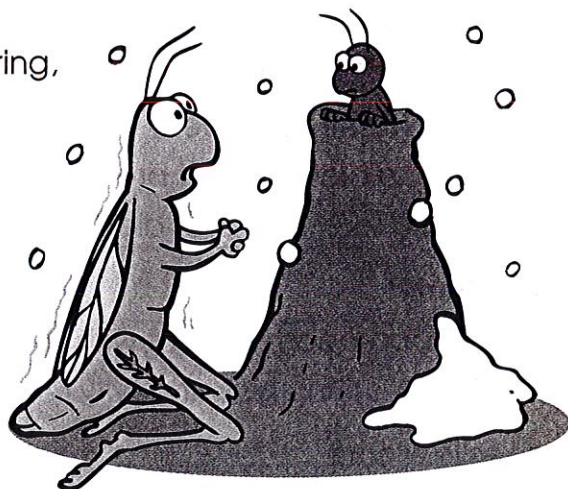
4. Write an epitaph of your own.

Comprehension: "The Ant and the Cricket"

A silly young cricket, who decided to sing
Through the warm sunny months of summer and spring,
Began to complain when he found that at home
His cupboards were empty and winter had come.

At last by starvation the cricket made bold
To hop through the wintertime snow and the cold.
Away he set off to a miserly ant
To see if to keep him alive he would grant
Shelter from rain, a mouthful of grain.
"I wish only to borrow—I'll repay it tomorrow—
If not, I must die of starvation and sorrow!"

Said the ant to the cricket, "It's true I'm your friend,
But we ants never borrow, we ants never lend;
We ants store up crumbs so when winter arrives
We have just enough food to keep ants alive."



Directions: Use context clues to answer these questions about the poem.

1. What is the correct definition of **cupboards**?

- ☐ where books are stored ☐ where food is stored ☐ where shoes are stored

2. What is the correct definition of **miserly**?

- ☐ selfish/stingy ☐ generous/kind ☐ mean/ugly

3. What is the correct definition of **grant**?

- ☐ to take away ☐ to belch ☐ to give

4. In two sentences, describe what the poet is trying to say with this poem.

Comprehension: "The Elf and the Dormouse"

Under a toadstool
Crept a wee elf
Out of the rain
To shelter himself.

Under the toadstool
Sound asleep
Sat a big dormouse
All in a heap.

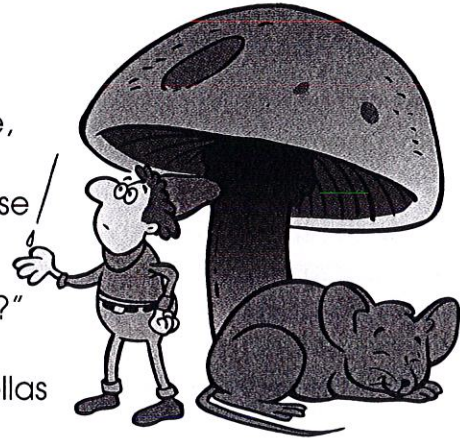
Trembled the wee elf
Frightened, and yet
Fearing to fly away
Lest he got wet.

To the next shelter
Maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee elf
Smiled a wee smile,

Tugged 'til the toadstool
Toppled in two,
Holding it over him
Gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home,
Dry as could be;
Soon woke the dormouse
"Good gracious me!"

"Where is my toadstool?"
Loud he lamented.
And that's when umbrellas
First were invented.



—Oliver Herford

Directions: Use context clues or a dictionary to answer these questions about the poem.

1. This humorous poem tells about what invention? _____

2. What do you think a **dormouse** is? _____

3. What is the correct definition of **lamented**? _____

4. Write a two-verse poem below describing the invention of a useful object.

Comprehension: "The Eagle"

Personification is a figure of speech in which human characteristics are given to an animal or object.

Example: The trees danced in the wind.

Trees do not dance; therefore, the trees are being personified.

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson



Directions: Answer these questions about the poem.

1. What is the correct definition of **crag**? _____

2. What is the correct definition of **azure**? _____
3. Which phrases in the poem show personification? _____

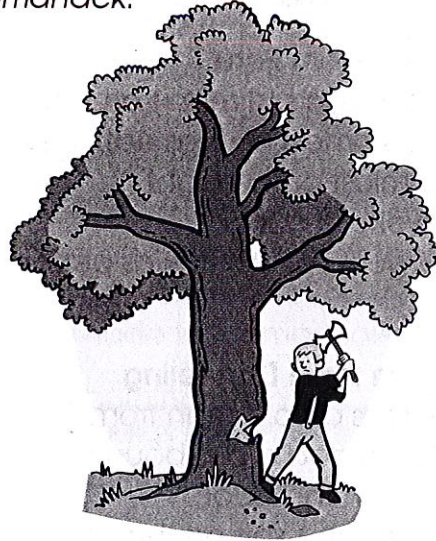
4. Explain what one of these phrases actually means. _____

5. What is the author trying to say in the last line of the poem? _____

Comprehension: Proverbs

Proverbs are bits of advice for daily life. The following proverbs were written by Benjamin Franklin in 1732. They were published in *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

1. Keep conscience clear,
Then never fear.
2. Little strokes
Fell great oaks.
3. From a slip of foot you may soon recover,
But a slip of the tongue you may never get over.
4. Doing an injury puts you below your enemy;
Revenging one makes you but even with him;
Forgiving it sets you above him.



Directions: Explain the meaning of each proverb.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

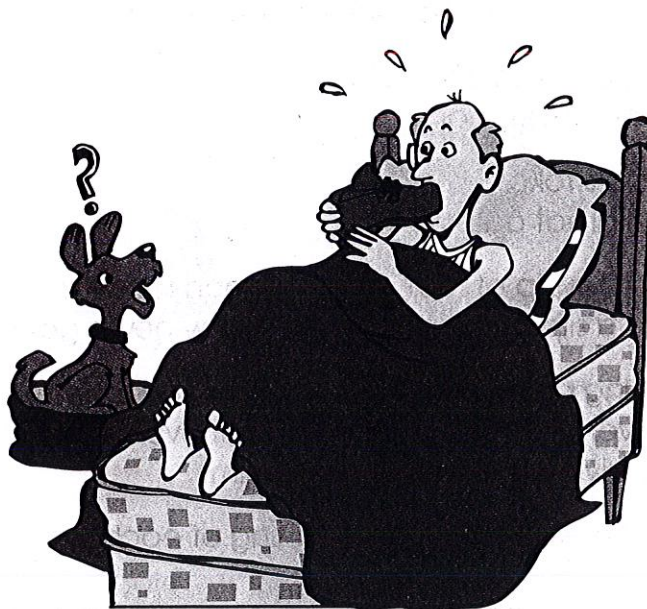
Write a proverb of your own.

Comprehension: Limericks

A **limerick** is a humorous verse consisting of five lines. The first, second and fifth lines rhyme, and the third and fourth lines rhyme.

Old Man From Peru

There was an old man from Peru,
Who dreamed he was eating his shoe.
In the midst of the night
He awoke in a fright
And—good grief!—it was perfectly true.



Old Man From Darjeeling

There was an old man from Darjeeling,
Who boarded a bus bound for Ealing.
He saw on the door:
"Please don't spit on the floor."
So he stood up and spat on the ceiling.

Directions: Answer these questions about these silly limericks.

1. In "Old Man From Peru," what was perfectly true? _____

2. How did the old man from Peru feel when he awoke? _____
3. In "Old Man From Darjeeling," what is Ealing? _____
4. Did the old man from Darjeeling break any rules? _____

Write your own silly limerick below.

Comprehension: "The Tyger"

Imagery is a "picture" that comes into the reader's mind when reading certain words.

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinew of thy heart,
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

—William Blake

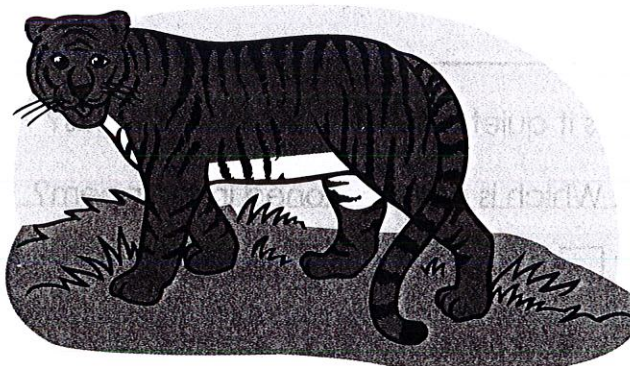
Directions: Use context clues or a dictionary to answer these questions about the poem.

1. What is the correct definition of **symmetry**?
5. What is the correct definition of **anvil**?

2. What is the correct definition of **immortal**?
6. What is some imagery in this poem?

3. What is the correct definition of **aspire**?

4. What is the correct definition of **sinew**?



Comprehension: Old Gaelic Lullaby

A **Gaelic lullaby** is an ancient Irish or Scottish song some parents sing as they rock their babies to sleep.

Hush! The waves are rolling in,
White with foam, white with foam,
Father works amid the din,
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush! The winds roar hoarse and deep—
On they come, on they come!
Brother seeks the wandering sheep,
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush! The rain sweeps over the fields,
Where cattle roam, where cattle roam.
Sister goes to seek the cows,
But baby sleeps at home.



Directions: Answer these questions about the Gaelic lullaby.

1. What is Father doing while baby sleeps? _____

2. What is Brother doing? _____

3. What is Sister doing? _____

4. What do we assume Mother is doing? _____

5. Is it quiet or noisy while Father works? ☐ quiet ☐ noisy

6. Which is not mentioned in the poem?

☐ wind

☐ sunshine

☐ waves

☐ rain

Comprehension: "The Lark and the Wren"

"Goodnight, Sir Wren!" said the little lark.
"The daylight fades; it will soon be dark.
I've sung my hymn to the parting day.
So now I fly to my quiet glen
In yonder meadow—Goodnight, Wren!"

"Goodnight, poor Lark," said the haughty wren,
With a flick of his wing toward his happy friend.
"I also go to my rest profound
But not to sleep on the cold, damp ground.
The fittest place for a bird like me
Is the topmost bough of a tall pine tree."



Directions: Use context clues for these definitions.

1. What is the correct definition of **hymn**?

- ☐ whisper ☐ song ☐ opposite of her

2. What is the correct definition of **yonder**?

- ☐ distant ☐ mountaintop ☐ seaside

3. What is the correct definition of **haughty**?

- ☐ happy ☐ friendly ☐ pompous

4. What is the correct definition of **profound**?

- ☐ restless ☐ deep ☐ uncomfortable

5. What is the correct definition of **bough**?

- ☐ to bend over ☐ tree roots ☐ tree branch

6. Write another verse of the poem.



Name: _____

Review

Directions: Complete the following exercises.

1. Define the following terms. Then write an example of your own that illustrates each term.

personification: _____

imagery: _____

proverb: _____

rhyme: _____

2. Why are lullabies sung to babies? _____

3. Name two lullabies you know. _____

4. Why do you think poets like to write about nature? _____

5. Many songs start out as poems. Listen to one of your favorite songs. Is it written in rhyming verse? Does it express the writer's thoughts on a certain subject? What subject?
